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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents lesson plans and activities that were used in a study exploring the reader response patterns produced by Year 12 students from three different schools to the teaching of classical literature in translation. The emphasis is placed on their reading and reacting to the Homeric "Odyssey." Lesson plans and activities using reader response techniques were provided to the teachers and personal reading journals were distributed to all students participating in the study. Although designed with British students in mind, the resources could be adapted for use in other countries. The main aim of the reading journals was to enable students to record their personal responses to the passages studied in the classroom. The lesson plans set out reading programs that promote an autonomous reading based on the experiences and expectations of individuals. Since students need time to interact with the text to be able to articulate their initial response to it, students were given time in the observed lessons to reflect on their own encounters with the text. Students also discussed their observations in small groups of up to five students, and then discussed group choices with the entire class. The lesson plans include exercises involving three variations of a prediction exercise: prediction alternatives; student's own predictions; and generic descriptive labels. (Contains 10 references.) (PM)

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# Towards Responsive Teaching and Learning of the *Odyssey*: Suggested Lesson Plans and Activities

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**Cambridge School Classics Project**

This resource pack contains an outline of the aims and objectives of the proposed activities, followed by a sample of student reading journals and lesson plans for teachers who taught the *Odyssey* as part of a Classical Civilisation course for A-Level students in British schools.

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## Towards Responsive Teaching and Learning of the *Odyssey*: Suggested Lesson Plans and Activities

The present lesson plans and activities were used in a study exploring the reader response patterns produced by 35 A-Level (Year 12) students from three different schools to the teaching of classical literature in translation. The emphasis is placed on their reading and reacting to the Homeric *Odyssey*, one of the set-texts for their A-Level Classical Civilisation course in Britain. Lesson plans and activities using reader response techniques were provided to the teachers and personal reading journals were distributed to all students participating in the study. Although designed with British students in mind, the resources could be adapted for use in other countries, as the Homeric epics are among the cornerstones of western literature and are taught as set texts in most countries of the Western world.

*The reading journals*

The main aim of the reading journals was to enable students to record their personal responses to the passages studied in the classroom. The researcher hoped to gain additional insights into students' reading processes and the value of the employed reader response activities (RRA). Students recorded their thoughts after their individual reading, at the end of their group-work and during the class discussions. Students were given detailed instructions by the researcher as to when they should put down their responses, providing thus the necessary consistency for the analysis of their responses.

*The lesson plans*

The six lesson plans were based on an equal number of key passages from the *Odyssey*, varying in length between 150 and 200 lines. This was considered to be a reasonable amount of text for students to tackle within a 50 minutes lesson. The selected passages were as following (*all references are to the Lattimore translation*):

a. Odysseus and Calypso, Book 5, ll. 85-191
b. Odysseus and Nausicaa, Book 6, ll. 135-210
c. Demodocus and Odysseus, Book 8, ll. 485-586
d. Penelope and Odysseus, Book 19, ll. 104-212
e. Slaughter in the Great Hall, Book 22, ll. 310-501
f. The Recognition Scene: Penelope and Odysseus, Book 23, ll. 166-239

The students were allowed time for a preliminary 'private' encounter with the text and time to reflect on their responses individually and then within their groups. The main aim of the lesson plans was to set out a reading programme that promoted an autonomous reading based on the experiences and expectations of individuals who were, at the same time, members of an interpretive community (Fish, 1980), *the classroom*. The lessons had four stages: (a) Establishing personal response; (b) Group work; (c) Class discussion; and (d) Summarising exercise.

*A. Establishing personal response*

Students need time to interact with the text, to be able to articulate their initial responses to it and share them with the rest of the class. Furthermore, if the focus is on *making* meaning rather than *finding* meaning in the text, then this need becomes even greater. Students were given time in the observed lessons to reflect on their own encounters with the text. It seems a paradox that, whilst students are usually told that their written accounts should undergo careful scrutiny and constant rewriting, a complete reading is approached as something to be acquired on first encounter.

*B. Group work*

The next stage involved discussion within small groups of up to five students. This gave students the chance to interact closely with each other. The activity itself provided a setting where pupils shared ideas, compared and contrasted differences and likenesses. They also learned to defend their views and to modify them in the light of compelling arguments and to be collaborative and motivated, without being antagonistic.

*C. Class discussion*

The class as a whole discussed the choices of every group and decided on the most appropriate. The aim was to avoid any sense of teacher- or peer-judgement. Personal responses cannot be judged on a basis of 'right' or 'wrong', provided that they are not based on misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Class discussion focused also on the main issues that had occupied small groups (which were raised either by students or by the teacher). An agreed member of each group (chair) presented the conclusions of their group to the class. This phase was particularly important for teachers too, who needed to be sure that everybody had understood the key issues raised by each group.

*D. A summarising exercise* that recapitulated the main points raised during the discussion was a good way for both students and teachers to make sure that a record was made of all significant issues, which could be used for future reference and revision before the examinations.

*The selected activities*

The lesson plans included exercises involving three variations of a single technique, that is the prediction exercise. Predicting as a way of eliciting personal responses to literature is a well-established technique (Protherough, 1983; Dias and Hayhoe, 1988; Lunzer and Gardner, 1984; Calfee and Drum, 1986; Thompson, 1987; Early and Ericson, 1988; Protherough and King, 1995; Wilhelm, 1997).

Prediction activities allow for multiple interpretations of the taught text. Pupils are like the members of an audience: giving one's own predictions to the story is like receiving the text and filling in the gaps according to one's own reading processes. There is a happy co-insidence, where the creator and the perceiver come together in one person. Prediction activities can also activate students' previous knowledge and experience of texts and arouse motivation in finding out the likely development or outcome of a story.

There is, therefore, an internal cohesion between the theoretical model adopted for the undertaking and carrying out of the research and the formulation of the activities that put this theoretical model into classroom practice. The use of a single technique was preferred owing to the small number of lessons observed. This ensured more reliable data with regard to the effectiveness of the methodology adopted. All six lessons were planned in using a type of the prediction activities, as they are presented below. There were three types of predictions in total, so each was used twice.

**A. Prediction alternatives**

In this activity students were given five alternative outcomes to a scene. In their reading journals, students wrote down individually, in note form, the reasons that led them to opt for their selected outcome and reject the others. Then, in group discussion, individuals discussed with their peers their choice and came to a negotiated agreement regarding the most likely outcome.

**B. Students' own predictions**

The narrative was divided into short sections and students were asked to speculate on what followed or to fill in the gaps/missing lines between the instalments. This required pupils to use the evidence provided by the text up to this point.

**C. Generic Descriptive Labels**

Students took on the role of the author in continuing the story, using the generic labels adapted from Lunzer and Gardner's (1984) *Learning from the Written Word* :

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *action* | *argument* | *event* | *explanation* |
| *description* | *conservation* | | *somebody's thoughts* |

The generic labels represented different ways in which the story might be developed by the author. The students were also asked to justify their choices and to elaborate upon them: for instance, if they chose *action*, they were expected to say who the main characters would be? Whose *argument* would be advanced and why? On what events would the *description* focus and who was going to be the narrator (the author, one of the main characters, an extra-textual narrator)? Although the discussion was directed, the teacher's intervention was limited to clarifying statements and providing guidance, where needed. On the evidence of the findings, this activity was considered as the most difficult, yet the most interesting and enjoyable for some of the students. The so-called *labels* were not automatically 'recognisable' to all pupils. Thus, explanation of what was being asked of them, possibly with a few examples, was necessary for the activity to be undertaken.

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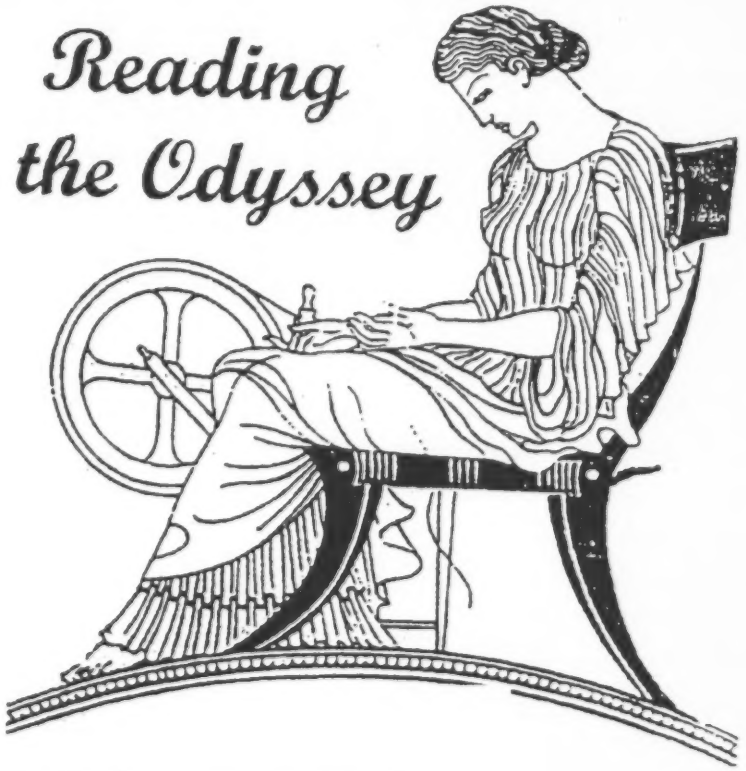
# Personal Reading Journal

## Reading the Odyssey



Name: _____

Group: _____

School: _____

## A note to students...

This booklet is designed to help you record your own thoughts and understanding of the passages we shall study together. It will become a personal document which should show how you have developed your own ideas about what you have read.

It is very important that you build up your own understanding of the passages.

You will study one passage of the *Odyssey* each session. The general pattern of the sessions will be as follows:

**1** Part of the passage will be read to you.

**2** You will be invited to predict the unfolding of the story. You will be given either four or five different possible outcomes of thow the story might develop and you will be asked to choose one of them. Read the passage individually first (the passage will be given to you or you can follow y9our text) and write down in one or two sentences the reasons for your selected prediction and also the reasons for rejecting the others (you can use the space provided in your reading journal, see Part 1).

It is very important to realize that as an individual you are free to come to your own conclusions. Learn to trust and value your own feelings and ideas.

**3** You will study the passage in your small group and discuss it together.

The first aim here is that you help each other to solve any problems of understanding and interpretation.

It is very important that you should feel able to bring out any ideas and feelings at this stage. It is the group's job to listen and help each other to express their own views.

The second aim is to work together and reach a common conclusion explaining briefly the reasons for your decision.

Although your ideas may differ, there are no "Correct answers". The final decision will be a result of co-operation and common agreement.

When your small group has completed its discussion, try to sum up in detail the conclusions your group has formed and the ideas that have emerged. There probably will be some unanswered questions at this stage. Record these too, using the space provided on your booklet (Part 2, Group notes).

**4** Each small group will report back its findings to the rest of the class and you shall discuss these views together.

Finally, after all opinions have been heard, the teacher will read the passage aloud and you will see then how the author decided to continue the story and discuss its content with your classmates and with your teacher.

As a beginning you can write down any feelings and ideas that occur to you and formulate any questions you would like to ask about the development of the story.

Furthermore, I think it is essential that you develop your own way of asking questions (based on your own understanding of the texts) and recording ideas and impressions that occur to your.

## Recording

I would like you to make notes on these occasions, although you can make additional notes at any other time you wish.

a) When you first read the passage through yourself and select your prediction.

b) When you discuss the passage within your group and try to come to a common conclusion.

c) Before the class discussion, in order to write down anything you felt whilst reading the passage and discussing within your small group (e.g. how you feel about the hero/es, how you would have reacted in a similar situation, what more you would like to know about them, etc.).

Finally, I would like to thank you for your cooperation and the help you give me with my research. It has been always a great pleasure for me working with pupils and I am sure this will be the case now as well. Have fun!

**Book 5** ***Calypso and Odysseus*** (Lattimore translation)

| Procedure | Time | Pupils' activities |
|---|---|---|
| **Prediction exercise**: After her encounter with Hermes, C. is searching for O. to announce her decision to him; she finds him sitting on the seashore weeping.<br>Focus on her speech: she announces at once that she will let him go and suggests he should start preparing a raft for his long journey.<br>Pupils are invited to predict Odysseus' reaction to her words, commenting briefly on their jotting papers (provided by the researcher) for their selected version and why they turned down the others.<br>*He thanks her and starts his preparations immediately.*<br>*Although he is homesick, he prefers to stay with her, because she has been so good to him..*<br>*He explains that he cannot sail on a raft and makes her swear that she is telling the truth.*<br>*He does not believe her and is more miserable now.*<br>*He agrees, but asks her to go with him.* | 10 min<br><br>10 min | *Choosing one of the five versions shows how each individual has responded to the above speech. [It is also a good opportunity for the teacher to control their students' level of understanding (choosing version no.2, for instance, means that students have not understood the key-points of the story) and assess their performance].*<br>*This activity also requires pupils to correlate different parts of the text and evaluate O's reply.*<br>*Writing down their comments demands from pupils a close and careful reading; in this way, they articulate the reasons for having chosen the particular option. Group-work and class discussion help them also to articulate their opinions and to develop their confidence speaking in large groups.* |
| After all versions have been heard, teacher reads aloud ll. 173-179; Students do a **first individual** reading and then discuss the following questions, divided into groups of five. After group-work, class discussion follows and pupils discuss:<br>O's reaction: Do you find it justified? What would you have done, if you were in his place?<br>Does he justify with his reaction the characterisation "cunning"?<br>Why is he asking her to take an oath? (correlation with the modern context)<br>**Summarising exercise:** Teacher recapitulates main points that have been raised by the students during the discussion. | 10 min | *Students enter into the character's situation and focus on the emotional tension of the scene; although Odysseus is desperate and eager to go, he receives C's offer with hesitation.*<br><br>*Pupils and teacher make sure that the class as a whole have understood main issues, which are useful to be kept in a written record; these main points can provide helpful information for the homework pupils are invited to do.* |

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## Part 1–Individual notes

**1** Odysseus thanks Calypso and starts his preparations immediately.

**2** Although he is homesick, he prefers to stay with her, because she has been so good to him.

**3** He explains that he cannot sail on a raft and makes her swear that she is telling the truth.

**4** He does not believe her and is more miserable now.

**5** He agrees, but asks her to go with him.

## Part 2– Group discussion

## Part 3– Class discussion

**Book 6: *Odysseus and Nausicaa:*** Odysseus, having wondered about the land to which he has come, emerges from the bushes like a hungry lion to confront the girls. The attendant away, but Nausicaa stands her ground. He is uncertain whether to clasp Nausicaa's knees in supplication, but decides to address her from a distance.

| Procedure | Time | Pupils' activities |
|---|---|---|
| **Prediction technique**: Nausicaa's reply to Odysseus.<br>Pupils are asked to comment on the unfolding of the story and choose between five different versions:<br>*N. is so impressed that she falls in love and expresses it .*<br>*Nausicaa praises him and promises to help .*<br>*She is sympathetic, but does not feel able to help, because she fears her father.*<br>*She orders her companions to feed him and give him something to wear, but advises it would be better for him to leave as soon as possible.*<br>*She shows no sympathy and leaves with her attendants.*<br>Pupils write down very briefly on their jotting papers, why they chose one of the five possible versions and why they turned down the others. Divided in groups of five they discuss the possible alternatives and try to reach a common conclusion. When all opinions have been heard, teacher reads ll. 204-232 aloud and pupils focus on particular points of Nausicaa's reply: | 15 min | *Choosing one of the five versions shows how each individual has responded to the above speech. [It is also a good opportunity for the teacher to control their students' level of understanding (choosing version no. 5 for instance, means that students have not understood the key-points of the story that they have had a less sensitive response) and assess their performance].*<br>*Keeping notes in their jotting papers helps pupils articulate their point of view and explain their choice; group discussion helps them to develop their confidence in speaking in large groups.* |
| she responds to Odysseus' account of his misfortunes, offers conventional consolation; she reassures him that his request will be fulfilled, but she makes no reference to the prospect of her marriage.<br>Q: Did you expect Nausicaa's reaction? How would you have reacted, if you were in her place?<br>Q: Why do you think Nausicaa does not make any reference to the prospect of her marriage?<br>Q: What impression did O. do to Nausicaa?<br>Q: Do you expect any development regarding Odysseus and Nausicaa? | 10 min | *Focus on particular aspects of the speech helps students appreciate Nausicaa's reply and concentrate on how characterisation (how she behaves-in contrast with how companions in particular-, her character etc.)*<br>*The questions require pupils' personal views of the passage Pupils enter into the character's situation and try to response as if they were the "dramatis personae".* |
| **Summarising exercise**: Teacher summarises the main points that have been raised in the class; these could have been already written on the board; s/he also reads the whole text aloud at the end of the lesson. | 5 min | *Pupils and teacher make sure that the class as a whole have grasped common main issues, which are useful to be kept in written record.* |

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## Part 1–Individual notes

1 *Nausicaa is so impressed that she falls in love and expresses it .*

2 *Nausicaa praises Osysseus and promises to help .*

3 *She is sympathetic, but does not feel able to help, because she fears her father.*

4 *She orders her companions to feed him and give him something to wear, but advises it would be better for him to leave as soon as possible.*

5 *She shows no sympathy and leaves with her attendants.*

## Part 2–Group discussion

## Part 3–Class discussion

**Book 8 Demodocus and Odysseus** *(Lattimore translation)*

| Procedure | Time | Pupils' activities |
|---|---|---|
| **Aloud reading**: Teacher reads ll. 487-498, while pupils underline words or phrases from the text that struck their attention.<br>Teacher pools the selected words/phrases on the OHP and pupils discuss them.<br>Focus on :<br>-O. praises Demodocus more specifically this time, whereas at 479-81 he praised singers in general. Why do you think he is doing that? (Demodocus has already displayed his skills at singing of the Trojan War).<br>O's request : Why does Odysseus ask from D. to sing about the Wooden Horse? (it is natural for O. to be more concerned with events in which he himself took part. His request implies that he is beginning to regain his confidence; that's why he asks from D. to sing about his own greatest Triumph in the war).<br>self-characterisation: he uses the adjective*dios* (good) to describe himself- why do you think he is doing that?<br>Odysseus seems teasing his audience and challenging it to make the correct deduction; this way also the current audience is prepared for the revelation of hero's identity. | 15 min | *Marking the text provides a good opportunity for pupils to make a first personal response to the text, an initial engagement with it. Underlying could be accompanied by notes kept on jotting paper that explain the reasons for the underlining.*<br><br>*Questions like those require a personal response according to individuals' understanding that fall within their horizon of expectation. The question format: "Why do you think " invites pupils to make their own personal response and not to use a stock of "right" responses. They require also a more careful reading and the ability to place the specific parts in the general context (what happened before? What is going to happen next? Do they contribute the unfolding of the story?)* |



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| **Prediction technique**; Demodocus' song: Teacher reads aloud D's song and students are invited to guess its effect on Odysseus. Divided into groups of four, students make an individual response first and then they discuss within their groups and conclude to a shared response. | 15 min | *Students keep notes in their jotting sheets and then share their responses with their classmates; sharing their responses can help pupils realise other aspects of the scene they did not pay attention to before and exchange their opinions within their groups before the class discussion .* |
| When all predictions have been heard, then pupils hear O's actual response to it Teacher reads aloud ll. 521-535; class as a whole discuss O's response. Pupils work on a worksheet that includes, among other things, the following questions<br>1. Did you expect O's reaction? How would you react if you were in his place? As he did at Demodocus' first song, O. weeps, but this time he does not cover his face. His reaction to the first song was obvious, but it is less obvious here.<br>2. Why then, do you think, does he weep?<br>Possible answers: mixed with the victory is the recollection of all his sufferings that went before and after it, it reminds him of his comrades in arms, e.t.c.<br>3. What purpose, do you think, does the simile (ll. 523-30) serve?<br>Odysseus weeps like a woman whose husband has been fatally wounded in battle defending his city and who is about to be carried off into slavery; he himself contributed mostly to the sacking of Troy and caused similar suffering to the Trojans; now it is as if he identifies with the victims and weeps with pity for all war's victims.<br>**Summarising exercise:** Teacher recapitulates the main points that have been raised in the class discussion. | 15 min | *This activity helps pupils to express their personal point of view and respond to the text articulating their opinions.*<br>*Different opinions are heard and class work on them interchanging ideas and responses.*<br><br>*Questions require also students to enter into character's situation and try to arrive at his motives; they also require (no. 2) students to correlate different parts of the epic and approach it as a whole.*<br><br>*Pupils express different opinions about the meaning of the text; variety of interpretations helps pupils to realise that there is not only one right meaning. They can also have experience through the text and not through somebody else's interpretation the qualities of a text/author. They serve also the purpose of what readers bring to the reading activity not only what they get out of it.* |



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## Part 1–Individual Notes

*Underline any words/phrases from the passage below that attract your attention.*

"Demodocus, I give you the highest possible praise. Either Zeus' Child, the Muse, or Apollo must have been your teacher. For it is remarkable how well you sing the tale of the Achaeans' fate and of all their achievements, sufferings, and toils. It is almost as though you had been with them yourself or heard the story from one who was. But I ask you now to change your theme and sing to us the making of the Wooden Horse, which Epeius built with Athene's help, and which my lord Odysseus contrived to introduce one day into the citadel of Troy as an ambuscade, manned by the warriors who then sacked the town. If you can satisfy me in the telling of this tale I shall be ready to acknowledge to the world how generously the god has endowed you with the heavenly gift of song".

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Prediction exercise: **What do you think is Odysseus' reaction to the song of Demodocus? Give your one alternative, how you would continue the story if you were the author, taking into acount the passage read before.**

## Part 2–Group discussion

## Part 3–Class discussion

**1** Did you expect Odysseus' reaction? How would you have reacted, if you were in his place?

**2** Why do you think Odysseus reacts like this ?

**3** What purpose, do you think, does the simile serve?

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**Book 19 *Odysseus and Penelope*, ll. 104-212** (Lattimore translation)

| Procedure | Time | Pupils' activities |
|---|---|---|
| Penelope's and Odysseus' conversation (first part), ll. 104-212; **Prediction exercise:** Teacher invites their students to predict if Odysseus will answer to Penelope's questions or he will try to avoid an immediate answer. Pupils should write down in a jotting paper the reasons for their choice. They can think individually for a while and then work within groups of four. When all opinions have been expressed, teacher reads aloud Odysseus' reply. | 10 min | *Prediction techniques require pupils' personal responses. In this particular moment, of course, the choices are only two: either O. answers truly or not; it can, however, provide an indication about pupils' understanding so far and about the extent to which they are familiar with the techniques Homer uses (pupils have encountered a similar scene in Bk. 7, where Arete asks O. to reveal his identity; in some ways that scene prepares the ground for this one).* |
| ll. 106-122: **Odysseus' reply** focus on:<br>-his opening: he flatters his wife (8 lines!)<br>-the usage of the simile; there is some illogicality in O's argument, which the simile cunningly covers: by broadening the concept of *kleos* (fame) (and including the notions of morality, justice, piece) he tries to make her feel that it would be impolite or unkind to press her guest. | 10 min | *Focus on particular aspects of the two speeches helps students to make a closer, more careful reading (focus on the web-tale, for instance, helps pupils to realise the different tone and the different purpose that the narrative serves, since it is Penelope now who does the description and not one of the suitors); they can work individually (from a worksheet), before they discuss the topics in the classroom.* |
| ll. 124-163: **Penelope's speech:** pupils discuss now<br>-her deprecation of O's compliments<br>-her description about what she suffers and the trick of the web; the audience is already aware of the web-tale (Bk. 2, description by a suitor); pupils are invited to comment on what purpose this second narrative serves.<br>-her final lines that resume her questioning of O's identity. | 5 min | |



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| **Prediction technique**: Teacher invites pupils to guess O's reply to Penelope's repeating request; teacher can stop the reading in l. 167: *Then I will tell you;* and ask his pupils to predict the unfolding of his answer, jotting down in their papers the reasons for their choice.<br>Is he going to reveal his real identity or not? When all versions have been heard, teacher reads aloud ll. 167-202 and pupils discuss his reply, which is another lie about his background; focus on:<br>-the fluent and cool description of Crete's "ethnography".<br>-his invention that he has hosted Odysseus, (which emphasises not only his virtue but P's obligation to show equal generosity to her guest.)<br>Possible questions: Why do you think Odysseus uses this invention? What is he tying to achieve?<br>What impact might his words have on Penelope? How will she react? (a question which serves like a mini-prediction exercise). How would you react, if you were in her position?<br>**Penelope's reaction** (ll. 203-212) is presented not through speech, but through a simile; focus on the fact that the couple reacts in opposite ways (cf. the different similes) | 10 min | *For the value of this kind of exercise see p. 1*<br><br>*Pupils express their personal responses to the text and make a more careful, close reading, concentrating on the characters (both Odysseus and Penelope) and the fine balance, the emotional tension of the scene (furthermore, they could express their comments on the poet's art and the extent to which he succeeds to give a clear presentation of his main characters)* |

## Part 1–Individual Notes

*"Honoured wife of Laertes' son Odysseus", answered the inventive Odysseus, "will you never stop asking me about my ancestry? Very well , I will tell you".*

What is Odysseus going to tell to Penelope? Write down your own views about his answer and the unfolding of the story.

## Part 2–Group notes

## Part 3–Class discussion

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**Book 21** ***The test of the bow (Lattimore translation)***

| Procedure | Time | Pupils' activities |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher reads aloud ll. 269-310, where Odysseus asks permission to try in his own turn the testing of the bow and what Antinoos' replies to him.<br>**Prediction exercise**: In order to facilitate oriented discussion without teacher intervention, pupils are presented with a list of descriptive **generic labels** for the kind of way in which the story might develop:<br>*action* *argument* *events*<br>*someone's thoughts* *conversation* *description*<br>*explanation* (reason). Pupils do not choose only one of the above generic labels, they also write a few things about the unfolding (action, main characters who participate, etc.) | 15 min | *Choosing one of the mentioned alternatives shows how each individual has responded to the above text. It is also a good opportunity for the teacher to control their students' level of understanding*<br>*This activity requires also pupils to correlate different parts of the text and comment on the importance of the present scene. (edge point, fine balances, tension, main characters' sketching, etc.).* |
| Discussion, in fours, centres on two things: what was in the paragraph being examined and what one could expect to find in the next paragraph. Within each of these, pupils could think about the actual things that were described or they could decide about the form of the story as indicated by the set of possible labels. (Lunzer &Gardner, *Learning from the Written* World, p. 197) | 15 min | *This kind of questions requires pupils' personal views and their perceptions of the scene. Pupils articulate their personal responses in front of the class and develop their confidence speaking in front of large groups.* |
| After all versions have been heard, teacher reads ll. 311-375 aloud and then the class as a whole discuss the unfolding of the scene. Possible questions:<br>What do you think of Penelope, (as she appears in her words) in the passage?<br>Do you find Eurymachus' excuse justified?<br>What do you think of Telemachus' attitude in this passage?<br>Does it correspond to the picture the audience have had so far for him? (you can take into account other parts of the epic, where Telemachus' presence is important) | | *Pupils and teacher make sure that the class as a whole have understood main issues, which are useful to be kept in a written record; these main points can provide helpful information for the homework pupils are invited to do.* |
| **Summarising exercise :** Teacher recapitulates the main points of the class discussion as they were raised by the pupils. | 5 min | |

## Part 1–Individual Notes

**1** *Action*

**2** *Argument*

**3** *Somebody's thoughts*

**4** *Conversation*

**5** *Events*

## Part 2–Group notes

## Part 3–Class discussion

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**Book 22 *Slaughter in the Great Hall*** (Lattimore translation)

| Procedure | Time | Pupils' activities |
|---|---|---|
| **Prediction exercise:** Teacher reads aloud ll. 292-329; Focus on Leodes' plea to Odysseus. to spare his life: he never touched any of the women in the palace, he tried to restrain the suitor, he has had many years of service with Odysseus.<br>Pupils divided in groups of four discuss O's reaction: "Is he going to grant L's plea or not?" and write down the reasons for their choices.<br>Class discussion: When all versions have been expressed, teacher reads aloud ll. 336-341 and pupils jot down their point of view regarding some questions from the worksheet provided by the teacher; the class as a whole discuss: Do you find O's reaction justified?<br>How would you have reacted, if you were in his place?<br>Comment on O's wording and the degree of cruelty regarding his act.<br>A similar scene is occurring in the next two lines; Phemius, the famous minstrel, beseeches O. to spare his life.<br>Pupils are invited to guess if he will act in the same way as before (they do not need to write anything, but this question acts as a mini-prediction exercise.<br>Focus on P's speech: he possesses a god- gifted charisma and he sung for the suitors against his will.<br>When pupils have expressed their opinion, teacher reads aloud ll. 355-377 and students discuss O's response to P's words (note also Telemachus' intervention). | 15 min<br><br>10 min | *Prediction techniques require pupils' personal responses. In thi particular moment, of course, the options are only two: either O grants Leodes, request or not; it can, however, provide an indicatio about pupils' understanding up to this point about the hero' emotional situation and the techniques Homer uses to develop th unfolding of the story.*<br>*Pupils keep notes in their jotting papers explaining the reasons fo their choice.*<br><br>*Pupils jot down their responses on their papers; being for or against O.'s reaction reflects pupils' own perceptions of the story. Class discussion helps individuals to elaborate their opinion in front of their classmates and is a good opportunity for different opinions to be heard. Pupils can also themselves assess their responses in the light of other classmates' opinion and pay attention to specific parts of the story that are probably misunderstood or not exploited to the extend they ought to.*<br>*Pupils are in front of a different reaction now and they should try to identify the reasons for that (helpful indication could be O. general attitude towards minstrels and the respect they from people in general for their art of singing-one could correlate that to the respect people show nowadays to popular artists.* |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher reads aloud ll. 378-501, where the female servants and Melanthius are slaughtered; Pupils are invited to jot down on their jotting papers one or two adjectives that describe their feelings while reading this passage.<br>Teacher pools on the OHP proposed adjectives and then class discuss the following topics:<br>Do you think O's act to kill all the female servants that slept with the suitors is justified?<br>Do you think that O. exceeds some limits to a certain degree?<br>What is the purpose of the simile in ll. 465-472?<br>What would you have done if you were in his position?<br>Pupils discuss the rhetoric of the text and try to explain why they found O's acts justified at first place and why they think—if they do think at all—that he overreacts now. Emphasis should be given on the wording that Homer uses to express the cruelty of female servants' slaughter as well as that of Melanthius.<br>Summarising exercise: Teacher summarises the main points that have been raised in the class; these could have been already written on the board; s/he also reads the whole text aloud at the end of the lesson. | | *Jotting down an initial response shifts the interest to the reading activity itself; what was the initial reaction to reading, something that requires no further thinking.*<br>*These questions serve the purpose of making students think about the extent to which O's acts are justified and necessary. Is this the right thing for a man who suffered his sufferings to do?*<br>*Was the slaughter of the female servants necessary-since now all the suitors are dead and they do not threat him or his wife any more-or it was excessive?*<br>*Pupils,which might have been persuaded by his previous decision to kill the suitors, might find this arbitrary and cruel, something that bears questions about what O actually learned from his journey of life, whereas others might argue that his acts are just and have one main purpose, i.e. to prevent similar situations to happen in the future.*<br>*Pupils and teacher make sure that the class as a whole have grasped common main issues, which is useful for them in a written record.* |

***Panos Seranis- University of Cambridge***

## Part 1—Individual Notes

*What is going to happen to Demodocus? Is Odysseus going to grant his plea or not ? Write down your opinion giving reasons for your answer.*

## Part 3—Adjective jotting

## Part 2—Group notes



## Part 4—Class Discussion

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**Book 23:** ***The Recognition Scene*** Eurykleia informs Penelope that the suitors have been killed by Odysseus who came back, but she does not believ her. When she finally comes down from the chamber, Telemachus accuses her of being harsh towards Odysseus.

| Procedure | Time | Pupils' activities |
|---|---|---|
| **Aloud reading:** Teacher reads ll. 166-172 and pupils focus on the way O. addresses his wife.<br>**Prediction exercise:** Pupils are invited to guess the unfolding of the story, i.e. how Penelope replies to Odysseus. Divided into groups of four, pupils are given some **generic** labels for the kind of way in which the story might develop: action, *argument., conversation, description, explanation, someone's thoughts.*<br>and write down in their jotting papers the reasons for the preferred one (giving few hints for the unfolding of the story) and why they think the others are inappropriate.<br>When all groups have expressed their opinions, then teacher reads ll. 173-204 aloud and pupils discuss Penelope's reply and Odysseus' reaction to it.<br>-she builds on his speech, using similar patterns (cf., for instance, the beginning of her speech "*you are so strange*" and the order to Eurykleia.<br>-she grasps his request as a chance to try him out (the bed sign)<br>Possible questions:<br>Did you expect Penelope's reaction? (Penelope appears suspicious throughout the epic, this is one of her permanent characteristics.)<br>Why do you think she uses this artifice to test him?<br>How do you judge it?<br>Penelope is persuaded by an external sign, i.e. the making of bed by his husband, and not by his appearance.(if necessary, teacher can provide pupils with Book 19, ll. 215-260, where Penelope "tests" Odysseus again and she is thereafter persuaded by him) | 5 min<br>10 min<br>10 min | *For the value of the prediction exercises, see other lesson plans. The particular technique of prediction exercise tries to provide pupils with an oriented discussion without -or with minimum teacher intervention. They focus on both what was in the paragraph being examined and what one could expect to find in the next paragraph.*<br>*Keeping notes in their jotting papers helps pupils to articulate their point of view and explain their choice; group-discussion helps them to listen to other classmates' ideas and develop their confidence in speaking in large groups.*<br>*The questions require pupils' personal views of the passage. Pupils enter into the character's situation and try to respond as if they were the "dramatis personae".*<br>*They can also comment on poet's qualities and recognise formulaic forms common to modern pieces of literature (recognition from external signs) and evaluate the current one.* |

## Part 1–Individual Notes

**1** *Action*

**2** *Argument*

**3** *Somebody's thoughts*

**4** *Conversation*

**5** *Events*

## Part 2–Group notes

## Part 3–Class discussion

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